

The National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) is a network of established and emerging rural institutions that work together to strengthen rural America. The principal members of the network are State Rural Development Councils in 37 states.

Each of the State Councils, which are comprised of active members from a broad range of rural development-related organizations, is served by a full-time executive director. States differ in how they are organized and in the rural issues they decide to address.

This profile is one in a series highlighting the work of the State Councils.

For more information about the National Rural Development Partnership:

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**National Rural
Development
Partnership**

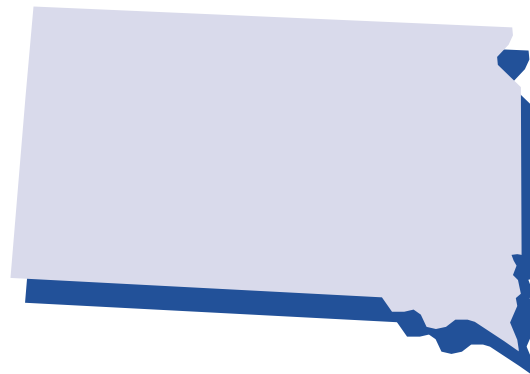
State Profile

South Dakota Rural Development Council

One of eight pilot councils, SDRDC was founded in 1989-90 as part of then-President Bush's "Initiatives on Rural America." It claims the distinction of being the nation's first state rural development council. Since its formation, SDRDC's many successes have helped pave the way for the creation of dozens of other state councils.

SDRDC is firmly established as a key player in South Dakota's rural and economic development. Often described as a "barrier removal council," SDRDC's reputation for being able to deal effectively with complex and rapidly changing issues has led rural leaders and state partners to call upon the Council for assistance. SDRDC's work on housing, disaster relief, small business assistance, value-added agriculture, microlending, and manufacturing assistance initiatives has been impressive.

Julie Johnson, SDRDC's executive director, has been involved with the Council since its first days. When SDRDC was first formed, Johnson was the presi-



dent of the Industry and Commerce Association of South Dakota and an active partner in many of the Council's activities. Since becoming executive director in November 1995, Johnson has provided SDRDC with a strong sense of purpose and a focused mission.

Contacting SDRDC

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SDRDC, with the support of its actively involved partners, has helped improve the lives of South Dakota's rural citizens. These partners include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▼ Governor's Office of Economic Development
- ▼ SD Housing Development Authority
- ▼ USDA Rural Development
- ▼ USDA NRCS
- ▼ Small Business Administration
- ▼ US Army Corps of Engineers
- ▼ SD Municipal League
- ▼ SD Association of Towns and Townships
- ▼ SD Association of Cooperatives
- ▼ Governor's Office of Tribal Government Relations
- ▼ The Great Sioux Nation--9 Tribal Governments
- ▼ Economic Development Administration
- ▼ Manufacturers Extension Partnership
- ▼ SD Conservation Districts
- ▼ SD Association of RC&D's
- ▼ SD Association of Counties
- ▼ SD Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- ▼ SD Bankers Association
- ▼ SD Rural Electric Cooperatives
- ▼ SD Retailers Association
- ▼ SD Extension Service
- ▼ Small Business Development Centers
- ▼ SD Board of Regents
- ▼ SD Department of Tourism
- ▼ SD Department of Transportation
- ▼ SD Department of Health
- ▼ SD Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- ▼ SD Department of Agriculture
- ▼ FEMA
- ▼ SD International Business Institute
- ▼ USDA Farm Service Agency
- ▼ SD ValueAdded Cooperative Center



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NRDP State Profile

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South Dakota State Rural Development Council at Work

Marketing and Feasibility Study Funds for Value-Added Agriculture

In 1999, the South Dakota Legislature created a \$3.4 million fund for communities to conduct feasibility and marketing studies on value-added agriculture projects. Already an enormous success, this loan and grant fund came about, in part, because of SDRDC. The Council helped conduct a gap analysis that identified communities' needs for funds to conduct studies before they developed value-added agricultural projects. In addition, SDRDC, working with several partners, helped legislators and agricultural groups design and implement the fund.

The 2000 Census

State leaders believed that it was important that a wide variety of partners from across the state be involved in the 2000 census. Since SDRDC

already had most of the right players in place, state leaders asked it to take a lead role, and, as a result, the Council essentially became South Dakota's "Complete Count" committee. Since it was estimated that 12 percent of the population was missed in the 1990 census, special emphasis was placed on working with South Dakota's nine American Indian reservations and tribal governments.

DEVNET

SDRDC, with the help of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and many private sector partners, developed DEVNET. This electronic link to all

of the state's economic, community, small business development, and other resources is available via the Internet. DEVNET features resources and contact information for opportunities available to entrepreneurs, small business owners, farmers, ranchers, and community leaders. It includes an electronic calendar, and regular updates and enhancements keep the information accurate and current.

"Great things happen whenever SDRDC gets involved. The Council has contacts and partners across the state dealing with the issues facing rural South Dakota."

**David Volk
Cabinet Secretary,
SD Department of
Commerce &
Regulation**

Small Business Development Centers

At the end of 1997, the state had decided to link its investments in economic development resources more closely to regional economic engines in the state. At this time, South Dakota's Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) wanted to remove small-business planners from the perpetual fundraising game and put them back to work helping small

business owners and entrepreneurs. To help stabilize funding, SDRDC worked with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, SBA, the private sector, and regional groups across the state. In addition, the Council helped develop and implement a plan for regional groups and SBDCs to work together, share overhead costs, and connect with each other and the communities they serve. Today, there are 11 small business planners in seven locations throughout the state. In addition to having access to key development resources, the planners are able to spend most of their time in the field. This makes them more available to the communities and entrepreneurs that need them.